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Serial No. 10/784,054
60130-2012; 02MRA0356

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 22, wherein the plastic film is applied by a spraying process.
3. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 22, wherein the step of applying the back-foamed layer comprises:
applying liquid plastic onto the plastic film after the hardening step; and
foaming the liquid plastic to form the back-foamed layer on the plastic film.
- 4.-21. (Cancelled)
22. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a vehicle body panel, comprising:
applying a plastic film onto a reverse side of a film-like exterior covering;
hardening the plastic film;
applying a back-foamed layer on top of the hardened plastic film; and
adding fibers to the back-foamed layer wherein the plastic film prohibits fibers from causing imperfections in an exterior surface of the vehicle body panel.
23. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 22, wherein the fibers are added by a long fiber injection method.

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24. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 22, wherein the fibers are added by placing a fiber mat onto the hardened plastic film before the step of applying the back-foamed layer.

25. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 22, wherein the fibers are added by being mixed with a material used to form the back-foamed layer.

26. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a vehicle body panel, comprising:

applying a plastic film onto a reverse side of a film-like exterior covering, wherein the film-like exterior covering is disposed in an open foam die;

hardening the plastic film such that plastic film prohibits fibers from causing imperfections in an exterior surface of the vehicle body panel; and

applying a back-foamed layer on top of the hardened plastic film, wherein the steps of applying the plastic film, hardening the plastic film, and applying liquid foamable material for forming the back-foamed layer are conducted in the open foam die.

27. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising placing at least one insert into the open foam die before the step of applying the back-foamed layer, wherein said at least one insert is embedded into the back-foamed layer after the step of applying the back-foamed layer.

28. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 26, wherein the open foam die comprises an upper mold half and a lower mold half, and wherein the step of applying the back-foamed layer comprises molding the back-foamed layer against the upper mold half to form varying thicknesses in the back-foamed layer.

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29. (New) A method for manufacturing a vehicle body panel, comprising:
applying a plastic film onto a reverse side of a film-like exterior covering that is disposed within a foam die;
hardening the plastic film;
applying a back-foamed layer on top of the hardened plastic film; and
adding fibers to the back-foamed layer wherein the plastic film prohibits fibers from causing imperfections in an exterior surface of the vehicle body panel.
30. (New) A method for manufacturing a vehicle body panel, comprising:
applying a plastic film onto a reverse side of a film-like exterior covering that is disposed in an open foam die;
hardening the plastic film such that plastic film prohibits fibers from causing imperfections in an exterior surface of the vehicle body panel: and
applying a back-foamed layer on top of the hardened plastic film, wherein the steps of applying the plastic film, hardening the plastic film, and applying liquid foamable material for forming the back-foamed layer are conducted in the open foam die.
31. (New) The method as recited in Claim 22, wherein the hardened plastic film has a thickness defined by a distance between a first surface in contact with the reverse side of the film-like exterior covering and a second surface in contact with the back-foamed layer, and preventing imperfections in the exterior surface of the vehicle body panel by prohibiting imprinting of the fibers through the thickness of the hardened plastic film.
32. (New) The method as recited in claim 22, including forming the hardened plastic film to have a maximum thickness of approximately .8 mm.

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33. (New) The method as recited in claim 22, including forming the film-like exterior covering to have a thickness generally between .5 and 1.5 mm.

34. (New) The method according to claim 26 wherein the open foam die includes a first die half and a second die half movable between an open position and a closed position, and wherein the steps of applying the plastic film, hardening the plastic film, and applying liquid foamable material for forming the back-foamed layer are conducted in one of the first and second die halves in the open position, and including the step of subsequently closing the open foam die by attaching the first and second die halves to each other and creating the black-foamed layer after closing the open foam die.

35. (New) The method according to claim 34 wherein the step of closing the open foam die occurs subsequent to the step of applying liquid foamable material.

36. (New) The method according to claim 29 wherein the step of hardening the plastic film onto the film-like exterior covering occurs while the film-like exterior covering is disposed in the foam die.